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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0478
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 4436
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0652
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 5053
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0913
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0365
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0932
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4650
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2941
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0952
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1600
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1544
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2886
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC 0351
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC 0498

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TASHKENT 001234

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA, DRL, AND G/IWI
G/IWI FOR ANDREA BOTTNER
SCA FOR BRIAN RORAFF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF
COURAGE AWARD

REF: A. SECSTATE 99729

- [1](#)B. TASHKENT 767
- [1](#)C. 06 TASHKENT 466
- [1](#)D. 06 TASHKENT 261
- [1](#)E. 07 TASHKENT 1822
- [1](#)F. TASHKENT 627
- [1](#)G. TASHKENT 1138

[1](#)1. (SBU) Post is honored to nominate human rights defender Mutabar Tadjibayeva from Uzbekistan for the Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage (ref A). A fearless and unfailing critic of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, Tadjibayeva was imprisoned for speaking out against the government's actions during the violent events in the city of Andijon in 2005. Tadjibayeva suffered horribly in prison - enduring forced psychiatric treatment and long stays in solitary confinement - which appears to have caused permanent damage to her health. Since her release from prison on medical grounds this year, she has continued her human rights advocacy and has not shied away from criticizing authorities.

As Tadjibayeva commented to poloff shortly after her release: "... they can break my body, but they can never break my spirit" (ref B).

ONE OF UZBEKISTAN'S MOST VOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

[1](#)2. (SBU) Tadjibayeva is one of the most vocal human rights defenders in Uzbekistan, a country in which human rights abuses remain a serious area of concern. As Chairwoman of her own human rights organization, the Fiery Hearts Club, Tadjibayeva has monitored human rights issues in the Ferghana Valley - one of the most sensitive regions of Central Asia - and helped ordinary people seek justice. She has monitored trials, published articles on child labor, reported on violations of women's rights for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), and organized public demonstrations. In August 2003, Tadjibayeva suffered serious head injuries and was hospitalized for more than a week after a

demonstration she organized demanding the resignation of a corrupt local prosecutor was forcibly dispersed by authorities.

IMPRISONED FOR CRITICIZING AUTHORITIES OVER ANDIJON EVENTS

13. (SBU) In May 2005, government forces allegedly killed numerous unarmed civilians and others during violent disturbances in the Ferghana Valley city of Andijon. The estimated number of dead varied between the government's total of 187 and eyewitnesses' reports of several hundred. Afterwards, authorities engaged in a fierce crackdown on individuals and organizations who dared question the government's official version of events. Despite the arrest of many of her colleagues, Tadjibayeva did not waver in her public condemnations of the government's use of force in Andijon. In October 2005, Tadjibayeva was arrested at her home as she was preparing to travel to Ireland for a human rights conference. She was charged with 17 counts of criminal activity, including slander, extortion, tax evasion, and membership in an illegal organization - her own unregistered human rights group.

14. (SBU) Despite the threat of a long prison sentence, Tadjibayeva remained defiant and told the court, "I do not regret my activities and I will continue them regardless of the verdict." In March 2006, following the conclusion of a trial in which she was denied the right to prepare an adequate defense and cross-examine several key state

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witnesses, Tadjibayeva was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment (refs C and D).

ENDURED SEVERE MISTREATMENT IN PRISON

15. (SBU) Tadjibayeva was held at the Tashkent Women's Prison Colony, where her health appears to have been permanently damaged due to severe ill-treatment. In July 2006, prison authorities committed Tadjibayeva to a prison psychiatric ward for ten days, where doctors reportedly administered unknown oral medications. She was held for long periods of time in solitary confinement for allegedly violating internal prison regulations and was frequently denied access to her relatives and lawyers for ostensibly the same reason. Between August and November 2007, Tadjibayeva was able to smuggle out of prison several letters in which she described her suffering: "...I do not want to be forgotten."; "...They are afraid of my truth, so they torture me this way."; "...I am holding out as much as I can" (ref E).

16. (SBU) Tadjibayeva's health reportedly deteriorated after she was placed in an unheated solitary confinement cell in winter for almost 50 days. She developed anemia, low blood pressure, and problem with her kidneys. Tadjibayeva was later diagnosed by prison doctors with an unknown but serious illness and underwent surgery in March 2008 at the Tashkent Oncological Hospital. After the surgery, Tadjibayeva was returned to prison, where authorities refused to discuss her diagnosis or prognosis with her (ref B).

RELEASED ON MEDICAL GROUNDS, BUT NOT AMNESTIED...

17. (SBU) After serving two years and eight months of her eight-year prison sentence, Tadjibayeva was released on medical grounds in June 2008 during a visit to Tashkent by Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher. She was not amnestied and remains under a three-year suspended sentence (ref F). Since her release, Tadjibayeva has renewed her human rights activism and is in the process of attempting to register her Fiery Hearts Club with local authorities in the Ferghana Valley. She has continued to criticize authorities over human rights issues,

including prison conditions, during interviews with independent journalists. We have always found Tadjibayeva's human rights reporting to be balanced and objective.

GRANTED AN EXIT VISA, ABLE TO TRAVEL ABROAD

¶18. (SBU) After interventions by post and European Embassies, authorities in September 2008 finally issued Tadjibayeva an exit visa for her to receive medical treatment abroad (ref G). She is currently receiving treatment at a hospital in Germany and is expected to return to Uzbekistan in November ¶2008. Since Tadjibayeva now has an exit visa, we believe that she will be allowed to travel to Washington next year if she is selected as a finalist for the Women of Courage award (Note: While the government sometimes has been reluctant to issue exit visas to human rights activists, in the past year, authorities have generally not interfered in the international travel of activists who already possessed exit visas. For example, five prominent human rights activists with exit visas were allowed to participate in an International Visitors exchange program with the United States in September 2008. End note.)

¶19. (SBU) Mutabar Tadjibayeva has proven herself to be an

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exceptionally brave woman in a country where standing up for human rights is often a dangerous activity. While she has certainly paid a personal price for her defense of others, Tojiboyeva has shown no regrets for her continued activism. Given her principled stand on human rights in the face of enormous government pressure, we believe that Mutabar Tadjibayeva is fully deserving of the Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage.

¶10. (SBU) Post has discussed the Award with Tadjibayeva, who agreed to be nominated.

¶11. (SBU) Biodata and Contact Information for Mutabar Tadjibayeva:

- Full Legal Name: Mutabar Tadjibayeva
- Title and Organization: Chairwoman, Fiery Hearts Club
- Date of Birth: August 25, 1962
- Country of Birth: Uzbekistan
- Citizenship: Uzbekistan
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- Telephone Number: 998 90 560 4226, 998 590 303 4299
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- Passport Number: CF 2873723 (Uzbekistan)

¶12. (U) Post's POC is Richard Fitzmaurice, Political Officer:

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